



CLD Standards Council Scotland

Submitted Response
to
Scottish Government

Democracy Matters 2

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About Us

The CLD Standards Council Scotland is the professional body for people who work or volunteer in community learning and development (CLD) across Scotland. As member led organisation we have a growing membership of over 2850 members, an executive committee and three functional committees which are made up of members from across the sector in Scotland. Our approach and work plans to deliver our core responsibilities are defined by our member committees and based on feedback from the wider membership.

Our Strategic Objectives are to:

- Deliver, maintain, and further develop a professional Approvals structure for qualifications, courses, and development opportunities for everyone involved in CLD.
- Maintain and develop the Registration system and establish members' services for practitioners delivering and active in CLD.
- Maintain and develop models of Professional Learning and training opportunities for CLD practitioners.
- Improve and develop our organisational capability.
- Lead and contribute to relevant CLD policy and workforce information services.

Vision

“Our vision is that the communities and people of Scotland are served by CLD practitioners that are recognised as competent, confident and committed to equality, empowerment and life-wide learning for all.”

Mission

“Our mission is to drive high standards of professional practice in the CLD sector by the approval of professional learning, the registration of practitioners and the enabling of professional development, working with our members to be a voice for the profession.”

The CLD Standards Council was established by Scottish Ministers in 2008, and works to the remit established by statute of driving high standards of professional practice in the CLD sector. It operates as a distinct organisation, hosted by an identified Government agency.

For further information on the CLD Standards Council please visit our [website](#) and view our social media [cldstandards](#) | [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) | [Linktree](#). If you would like to discuss this response further, please email us on contact@cldstandardscouncil.org.uk

Introduction

CLD is a field of professional practice that is critical in the achievement of any policy and legislation that requires community engagement, development and learning as it supports the learning, growth, empowerment of individuals and communities, as well as supports the delivery of other services. From community development supporting climate action change, sustainability and protecting our environment, as well as developing neighbourhoods, community empowerment and community support groups, to working with young people and adults regarding enablement and citizenship and improving literacy and numeracy within Scotland's communities which impacts on economy, health, and wellbeing.

CLD enables people across Scotland to identify their own individual and collective goals, to take action to bring about change and through this to achieve these goals. Using a range of formal and informal methods of learning and social development, CLD programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants, working particularly with those excluded from participation in the decisions and processes that shape their lives. Through working in these ways, CLD practice extends the reach of democracy and widens its scope.

CLD offers the learning and development opportunities to ensure communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe, to tackling poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth, and power more equally, working collaboratively to make Scotland's National Outcomes a reality however it is not recognised or acknowledged for its role and this we would like to see changed, starting with this strategy.

This report provides a high-level analysis of the feedback received from CLD workers and volunteers across the sector. Specifically, feedback was gathered to explore how CLD Standards Council members can input and support the development of the Scottish Government strategy for the benefit of CLD practitioners, communities and of the learners it works with.

This response was compiled following consultations with members of the CLD Standards Council, partner organisations and stakeholders, as well as having dialogue with individual members and the CLD Standards Council staff team, focusing themes set out in the documentation rather than individual questions.

Assumptions:

It is important to recognise that this CLD Standards Council response provides an insight into the views and experiences based on the those mentioned above. The consultation focus group data provided a valuable insight into the experiences based on the views of the member participants. This response is not representative of the entire CLD sector across Scotland or the full CLD Standards Council membership.

Response from the CLD Standards Council to Democracy Matters 2

Powers

We fully understand the positive impacts and significant benefits this offers planning partners, individuals, communities, and local economies. The powers proposed offer the capacity to enable community empowerment and development to support growth of local economies. As such, this approach could support substantial change which can be life changing if done correctly but this will require significant commitment, as well as powers, from all involved, especially the individuals and communities who will be giving up their time.

To see achievement, effective community learning and development, delivered by degree qualified CLD practitioners registered with the CLD Standards Council, is essential. We would like to see some assurance and a commitment from Scottish Government and local authorities that the significant investment and resources required by the CLD sector, individuals and communities will be made available to all involved. Ultimately this will enable the processes to be both a positive and a meaningful collaborative experience with the best outcomes for all.

A cultural change regarding meaningful engagement is required and we would welcome more detail in the guidance advocating innovative and creative methods which support engagement, commitment and ultimately support a real power shift. Examples of this are citizens assemblies, community panels, lived experienced focus groups and grassroots community development organisations. Community decision making groups, often run by volunteers, and supported by professionally qualified CLD workers, already have a number of powers as detailed in this plan, we would like to see more detail on the development existing powers such as how community groups can hold statutory partners to account if they do not feel meaningfully engaged or purposefully excluded.

It is critical that asset and service transfers from public bodies to volunteers and community groups should be driven by the need and benefit of the community, and not by local authority budget cuts impacting on loss of these services and provisions, with value always being weighted by recognition of the “best people/services and partners” to ensure positive outcomes for the community. It is important to put in place clear legislative guidance to ensure that volunteers and community groups are not pressured into taking on obligations and responsibilities for buildings and services that they do not have the skills, knowledge, capacity, or resource to sustainably carry out. Professionally qualified CLD practitioners play a critical role in supporting skills development and often “building the bridge” between community groups and the public bodies.

The [Improvement Service Model for the Future of Scottish Local Authorities](#) references CIPFA’s (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) recent report, [Investing in regional equality](#) – which draws a number of conclusions over what works. offering some key lessons learned such as *“Adequate and responsive funding: recognising where and when finance is available is important. Successful cities in this study redistributed funding and tax systems within their region to address regional and urban inequalities, making sure not to devolve power without appropriate funding.”* And *“Diversification: avoiding focusing only on economic development, instead widening scope to cultural, social or spatial improvements.”*

It is essential that community groups and volunteers are not burdened with the role of delivering services once offered by paid staff. Proposed development of powers for increasing local

decision-making should be affiliated with the principles of the [Volunteer Charter](#). [Volunteer Scotland](#) report concerns regarding “*funding pressure on public and third sector services may lead to the inappropriate engagement of volunteers*” which you can read in their recent “[Cost of Living](#)” report This would be a direct contravention of the Volunteer Charter. CLD volunteers already play a vital role in community development and support growth for individuals, communities and organisations. [Scottish Household Survey 2021](#) Telephone Survey shows that over 30% of adult volunteers in Scotland supported community development yet there is little reference to this large physical resource which unquestionably plays a vital part in support Scotland’s economy, locally and nationally. It would be unethical to see volunteers taking on the role carried out by previously paid CLD workers, civil servants, or other paid community roles because of cuts to budgets and funding.

Representation

It is essential that existing frameworks, reports, and approaches are understood and utilised during all steps of the processes by the decision-making bodies. Information is on offer from organisations such as the CLD Standards Council, SCDC, CDAS and others. It is critical all involved are aware of the [national standards for community engagement](#), and what excellent community development practice can offer with tools for engagement, self-evaluation and planning with models such as [LEAP](#) and [VOICE](#), [participatory budgeting](#), and [co-production](#). Co-production is an essential approach to ensuring fair and equitable commitment from all involved. [Planning With People - Community engagement and participation guidance](#) states “*Co-production is defined by the Scottish Co Production Network as the process of active dialogue and engagement between people who use services and those who provide them. Co-production requires people to act together on an equal basis, contributing their lived experience, skills, and ideas about what works to make our communities better. CLD practice offers that by supporting a Co-production approach, ensuring decisions affecting people are made with them, not for them.*” The CLD workforce is the professionally qualified community development workforce in Scotland and therefore fully understands these models, frameworks, and approaches.

To offer equity of representation and understanding of competencies values and roles, we suggest moving forward that local elected representatives should undertake a personal development programme which includes an induction to community development which could be offered by local CLD service as well as national organisations who are experts in this field for example: [CLD Standards Council](#), [Scottish Community Development Centre \(SCDC\)](#) and [Community Development Alliance Scotland \(CDAS\)](#). Elected representatives should have underpinning knowledge of the approaches and frameworks mentioned previously as well as [Community Development NOS](#), CLD [competencies](#), [ethics](#) and [values](#) and the CLD Standards Council registration requirements. This would support meaningful engagement and decision making for all involved.

Accountability and Participation

While it is recognised that many other public and voluntary sector staff contribute to the type of engagement required, professionally qualified CLD practitioners both paid and voluntary, are best placed in terms of their practice, skills, knowledge, and relationships with communities to co-ordinate activities and demonstrate good practice to support accountability. It is essential to acknowledge that professionally qualified CLD community development practitioners already play a crucial role in supporting the skills and learning needed for the implementation and development of community groups in response to emerging need. This was highly evident during

the [Covid 19 Pandemic; Community, COVID-19, challenge and change – Policy Scotland \(gla.ac.uk\)](#); [Engage, Educate, Connect, Empower: CLD, Resilience and Recovery - July 2020 \(cldstandardscouncil.org.uk\)](#) . Professionally qualified CLD practitioners offer high-quality learning, guidance and skills needed for not only the development, progress, and governance of community organisations, but also in supporting the operational delivery of community-based services, for communities, groups, and individuals, empowering them to have a greater stake in the communities in which they live and work, and in turn, Scotland’s wellbeing economy which includes Just Transition to Net Zero. Where planners and architects have spent years planning spaces and places, CLD has spent time studying community, and are qualified in implementing all the tools and techniques of good community work. It is essential we all understand each other’s strengths, collaborate and we feel strongly that the CLD sector and CLD as a professional practice discipline needs to be given a legitimate place and role in the process.

There is a requirement for change, and an acknowledgment that community voices are valued and respected and can impact on planning and guiding the development that is required for their local community. We welcome this consultation as without clearly defined guidance emphasising the importance of the community voice throughout all processes in this approach, and the critical role communities play, then there is an apprehension that control and influence is never truly with, and part of, a community’s power (e.g. local authorities can deny planning, developments can be overturned by the Scottish reporter etc). What assurances will communities be offered on this?

Historically and culturally decision-making power often lies out with the community so a considerable amount of work around approaches, the flow of communication, as well as developing trust and understanding from all parties will be needed. Without these community members may feel contempt, frustration, and disempowerment, with engagement being seen as another tokenistic and “being done to” initiative by community decision-making bodies and ultimately the local authority. We believe that professionally qualified CLD practitioners are best placed to lead this work.

The CLD Standards Council calls for all strategies and legislation that impact on Democracy Matters to be strengthened so that more detail and accountability is included, specifically regarding community wealth building, community empowerment and community asset transfer, so that the roles, responsibilities and ultimately accountability can be clearly seen as well as measured. To do this we suggest that further guidance is required to enable the thirty-two local authority CLD partnerships to not only record the same measurable data, but to offer insight into how democracy matters, and other community development strategies are being developed and are impacting Scotland’s communities. This can be reflected in strengthened CLD Regulations where there is already a requirement for the publication of 3-year CLD plans.

We would like to refer to some examples of CLD in practice. The “Changing Tides, Making Waves” youth conference in November 2020 was jointly organised by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) North Sea Commission (which aims to “achieve a productive and sustainable, climate-neutral, connected and smart North Sea Region”) and the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative. The conference focused on “Youth Participation Leading Positive Change Across the North Sea;” it was supported by CLD practitioners in the North East of Scotland and embodied approaches advocated in this response. The report on the conference is [available here](#). [Health Issues in the Community](#) is a course that enables participants to develop their understanding of the range of factors that affect their health and

the health of their communities and to explore how these factors can be addressed. Co-ordinated and supported by the Scottish Community Development Centre, these courses are often run by Community Learning and Development practitioners and tutors across Scotland. HIIC supports people to develop the skills and knowledge to address health issues using community development approaches. It places value on supporting individuals to work collectively; on extending participatory democracy; and on social justice and equity, offering an effective means of communication with people who are unlikely to respond to marketing strategies, and engaging them in [action and participation in decision-making](#).

HM Inspectors engaged with the CLD sector between April and June 2022. They visited 23 CLD settings and engaged with learners, volunteers, practitioners, local authorities and national third sector organisations to gather evidence. The settings visited covered a wide variety of urban and rural areas across Scotland and included national and third sector organisations. The HM Inspectors gathered evidence of how high-quality community development in a CLD context is helping to secure better outcomes for children, young people, families, and communities. The findings focus on the key themes of:

- Community response
- Volunteering
- Partnership working
- Digital access and workforce development
- Planning for the future and next steps

You can access their report here: [Responsive, supportive and resilient communities: A review of community development during the pandemic](#)

Standards, Resources and Relationships

There are serious concerns with the role out of strategies such as Democracy Matters 2 regarding the raising of hope and the expectations of meaningful change and growth within Scotland's communities, which, if no resources, infrastructure of services, or funding to implement change further down the line are secured, would lead to a shattering negative impact in and on those communities. In Scottish Governments [Planning with People](#) guidance published by the Scottish Government on the 21st April 2023, it clearly states "*Effective services must be designed with and for people and communities – not delivered, top down for administrative convenience. In order to be effective, community engagement must be relevant, meaningful and have a clearly defined focus.*" For this to happen this guidance must show commitment to this clearly throughout and requires the necessary commitment, funding, and resources to be made available.

We call for a strong and clear pledge from both Scottish Government and the thirty-two local authorities across Scotland, to commit to the principles of Fair Funding, which includes longer term funding models for community groups and organisations, around all community development activity. It is critical that there is an assurance and a guarantee from public bodies, as this will assist in developing relationships, continued support and meaningful engagement from individuals and communities. Fair Funding is needed to help communities, charities, voluntary groups, and social enterprises to thrive and provide greater security for our people. As stated by Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations ([SCVO](#)) on Fair Funding, to support Scotland's vital voluntary sector to adapt to current and future societal and economic challenges, and to address years of poor funding practices, fair funding that incorporates the following is urgently needed:

- Longer-term funding of three years or more
- Flexible, unrestricted core funding, which enables organisations to provide security, plan effectively, and fulfil good governance requirements.
- Sustainable funding that includes inflation-based uplifts and full costs, including core operating costs
- Funding that accommodates paying staff at least the Real Living Wage
- Accessible, streamlined, proportionate, and consistent approaches to applications and reporting, timely process and payments, and partnership between the funder and fundee

We fully support the introduction and development of a [community charter](#) and would like to offer information to help shape and inform. We feel strongly that aspects around equality, inclusion, dignity, and respect should be strengthened to ensure all persons involved (decision making bodies and in communities) are full informed, have equitable access to engagement, their rights adhered to, and their wellbeing is at the centre of the processes at all times.

The first-ever international standards for community development practice became available in 2018. The CLD Standards Council worked on the standards with the International Association for Community Development, and the IACD launched them at their AGM as part of the World Community Development Conference at the end of June 2018. The full standards guidance, and recommendations on how it can be used can be found on the [IACD website](#). As mentioned previously there are [National Occupation Standards \(NOS\) for Community Development](#), which outline clearly the skills, values and processes required for effective and appropriate community development practice across six functional areas.

We would also like to see reference to [Human Rights Bill for Scotland](#), which calls for stronger protections for human rights in Scotland, where dignity and respect are at the core of the proposed framework. The Scottish Government's proposed Bill will incorporate four international human rights treaties directly into Scots law: those covering economic, social, and cultural rights, disabled people's rights, rights of black and ethnic minority people, and women's rights. It includes a right to a healthy environment, and an equality clause to ensure equal access to the rights contained within the Bill. It will also include specific rights for older people and LGBT+ people, all of which are critical to be minded when setting standards for community decision making bodies and their engagement with individuals and communities.

The CLD Standards Council would urge Scottish Government to offer clear instruction regarding the expectations of the new decision-making bodies to ensure individuals and communities are treated with dignity and respect, and not subject to mistreatment, neglect or are misinformed, specifically regarding taking on liability and the overall responsibilities being put on them. Several concerns were raised regarding community groups taking on assets and being ill informed of legal managerial requirements. Examples were offered around communities' groups not being informed of such things as asbestos and legionella when transferred a community building. Assurance of full disclosure of information and liabilities along with the responsibility and power is needed and could be realised by the inclusion of a detailed principle, which address the requirements around the transfer of information and power from public bodies to communities, within the community charter.

Nurturing Community Capacity

It should be clearly stipulated throughout Democracy Matters and corresponding guidance that CLD as a professional practice discipline has a crucial role. Communities need consistent access

to high-quality, knowledgeable, and professional support through an infrastructure which supports capacity building across all thirty-two local authorities in Scotland. The professional practice of CLD, and its commitment to community-led approaches, should be emphasised as the most significant service to nurturing community engagement, capacity building and safeguarding the processes which ensure communities can successfully indicate and lead on the priorities of those who live there. This would include approaches as mentioned previously such as co-participation and community led action planning and research, supported by professionally qualified CLD practitioners who can offer community capacity building leadership.

Concerns were raised regarding the CLD workforce across local authorities and the third sector. Local authority budget cuts are having dramatic impact on services and staffing. This has been in place for two decades at least. Funding for projects and staff often on six- or twelve-month cycles, no job security or continuity of staff which impacts delivery, and community and partner relations. Often CLD volunteers being used to undertake previous paid jobs that were cut. Lack of consideration of the impacts these decisions are having on the volunteering experience. This conflicts on the growing demand on the sector for increased community development and supporting capacity building.

As mentioned previously, there are a number of plans, guidance and legislation which impact community empowerment, development, and engagement such as community wealth building, local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, community empowerment etc. Democracy matters guidance, and the authorities and new decision-making bodies must ensure there is rigor around all of these and that they align with each other, so communities and the CLD sector who works to support them are not stretched due to the level of duplication and replication. This could negatively impact the quality of engagement as well as the capacity of communities and supporting agencies.

Conclusion

Fundamental to the practice of CLD across all settings are these values which have been identified by the CLD Standards Council:

- **Self-determination** – respecting the individual and valuing the right of people to make their own choices.
- **Inclusion** – valuing equality of both opportunity and outcome, and challenging discriminatory practice.
- **Empowerment** – increasing the ability of individuals and groups to influence issues that affect them and their communities through individual and/ or collective action.
- **Working collaboratively** – maximising collaborative working relationships in partnerships between the many agencies which contribute to CLD, including collaborative work with participants, learners, and communities.
- **Promotion of learning as a lifelong activity** – ensuring that individuals are aware of a range of learning opportunities and are able to access relevant options at any stage of their life.

Community Development, an inter-woven discipline within professional CLD (Community Learning and Development) practice, is an approach to achieving transformative social change. It

is action taken through building organisation, learning and power within communities in order to promote democracy, sustainable development, equality, and social justice. It builds community capacity and influence by enabling people to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision making and service delivery.

We fully welcome the development of Democracy Matters 2 and the guidance that will sit alongside it and feel strongly that the CLD sector as a profession should be reflected throughout this guidance as a one of the key stakeholders to support and implement its ambitions. The aims and approaches align with CLD value-based practice as mentioned previously. These values adopted by the CLD Standards Council underpin CLD practice, and the CLD competences provide a framework for practice. How we practice as a profession is directly informed by why we are doing it – the CLD [Code of Ethics](#) provides the means for us to make this connection.

We fully support the development of a community charter that incorporates robust principles around equality, inclusion, dignity, and respect, to ensure all persons involved are fully informed, have equitable access to engagement, their rights adhered to, and wellbeing is at the centre of all processes.

We urge Scottish Government to lead on the cultural change required throughout the public bodies involved and request vigorous detail in the guidance to advocate for continuous meaningful engagement, commitment and ultimately support the power shift that is needed.

Finally, we ask for commitment to the principles of Fair Funding, alongside the significant investment needed so that funding, and resources required are recognised and made available. This proposal does not go far enough in its detail regarding the full physical and psychological resource requirements needed to realise the aspirations of Democracy Matters 2 in improving lives across Scotland's communities.